POL 14 VIETS (961)

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

EXCISE

Saigon 4787 9-8-67

PAGE 01 SAIGON 04787 040804Z

12
ACTION SS 70

INFO NSCE 00,CIAE 00,SSO 00,DODE 00,USIE 00,NSAE 00,CCO 00,/070 W

P R 021220Z SEP 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6080
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4065
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2376
AMCONSUL DANANG 862

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Zgubey DATE 12/24/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4787

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

LIMDIS

b-1 ec ed

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF [redacted]

1. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFF SEPT 1, MILITANT BUDDHIST [redacted] SAID HE THOUGHT FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS NOT LIKELY TO BE FREE. HE CLAIMED NUMBER OF INSTANCES OF RIGGING HAD ALREADY COME TO HIS ATTENTION. HE ALSO MAINTAINED THAT 100 YOUTH OF VOTING AGE LIVING IN [redacted] YOUTH CENTER HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN VOTING CARDS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES. [redacted] CLAIMED THAT GVN WITHHOLDING OF VOTING CARDS IN URBAN

PAGE TWO RUMJIR 4787 C O N F I D E N T I A L
AREAS IS WIDESPREAD AN, HE ADED IRONICALLY, EVEN MAI THO TRUYEN HAS BEEN UNABLE TO GET HIS CARD. (HA THUC KY TOLD EMBOFF SAME STORY ABOUT TRUYEN EARLIER IN THE DAY. HOWEVER

CONFIDENTIAL

EXCISE

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 04787 040804Z

[redacted] SAID SEPT 2 THAT TRUYEN HAD RECEIVED HIS CARD.)

2. [redacted] SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THEIRU AND KY COULDN'T WIN HONEST ELECTION. IF THEY GET MORE VOTES THAN ANY OTHER CANDIDATE, HE WAS CERTAIN COMPLAINTS WOULD BE FILED WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND, WITHOUT UNDUE OUTSIDE PRESSURE, ASSEMBLY WOULD THROW OUT WHOLE ELECTION ENABLING ENTIRE PROCESS TO BE RESTARTED ON "CLEAN, HONEST, BASIS." [redacted] ADDED THAT HE HAD DINED RECENTLY WITH HA THUC KY, TRUONG DINH DZU, DR. DAN AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF TRAN VAN HUONG. ALL OF THM, [redacted] CLAIMED, HAD EVIDENCE OF GVN PLANS TO RIG ELECTION AND MOST WOULD SUBMIT IT TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR EXAMINATION. SUU AND DAN MIGHT NOT, HOWEVER, BECAUSE SUU "HAS ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID TO SPEAK UP."

3. [redacted] SAID HE WAS NOT MORE ENCOURAGED BY UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS. MOST CANDIDATESARE OF POOR CALIBER AND THE GOOD ONESCAN'T POSSIBLY WIN.

PAGE THREE RUMJIR 4788 C O N F I D E N T I A L

4. [redacted] TOLD EMBOFF HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN SEEING MANY AMERICAN FIRENDS-"STUDENTS, INTELLECTUALS ANDJOURNALISTS." THEY HAVE ALL BEEN ASKING HIM WHY BUDHISTS NOT AGITATING MORE VIGOROUSLY FOR FAIR AND FREE ELECTIONS. EMBOFF ASKED MINTH IF BY AGIT'TION HE MEANT DEMONSTRATIONS; [redacted] SAID YES.

EMBOFF TOLD [redacted] THAT ANY AGITATION OF THIS SORT WOULD BE VERY UNWISE, THAT CONSTITUTION PROVIDES MECHANISMS FOR NON-VIOLENT OPPOSITION NOT TO MENTION RECENT LIFTING OF PRESS RESTRICTIONS WHICH GIVES OPPOSITIONISTS AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS PUBLICLY. EMBOFF CITED LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGN AS EXAMPLE. [redacted] AGREED THAT NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ISSUES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED FREELY DURING CAMPAIGN, ADMITTED THAT THIS WAS HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT, BUT THEN SAID , "I'LL BET YOU 1000 DOLLARS CENSORSHIP IS RESTORED AFTER ELECTION."

5. EMBOFF ASKED [redacted] SEVERAL TIMES IF AN QUANG BUDDHISTS

CONFIDENTIAL

[redacted]

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAIGON 04787 040804Z

SUPPORTING ANY PRESIDENTIAL OR SENATORIAL CANDIDATES.
[redacted] AVOIDED QUESTION EACH TIME.

6. COMMENT: (A) SEVERAL TIMES DURING CONVERSATION [redacted]
PROFESSED DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE CONSTRUCTIVELY IN POLITICAL

PAGE FOUR RUMJIR 4787 C O N F I D E N T I A L
LIFE OF COUNTRY. HE IS NONETHELESS OBVIOUSLY THINKING
IN TERMS OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND OTHER EFFORTS TO DISCREDIT
ELECTION SHOULD THIEU AND KY BE ELECTED. ON THE WHOLE HE
STILL REFUSES TO RECOGNIZE POLITICAL PROGRESS WHICH HAS
TAKEN PLACE OVER PAST TWO YEARS.

(B) THERE HAS BEEN TALK IN SAIGON LATELY OF POSSIBLE
POST-ELECTION ALLIANCE BETWEEN MILITANT BUDDHISTS AND NUMBER
OF DEFEATED PRESIDENTIAL AND UPPER HOUSECANDIDATES. WHETHER
SUCH ALLIANCE MATERIALIZES
AND WHAT FORM ANY SUCH OPPOSITION MIGHT ACTUALLY
TAKE REMAINS TO BE SEEN. MUCH DEPENDS ON NEW GOVERNMENT'S
ABILITY TO GIVE OPPOSITION SOMEE SENSE OF CONSTRUCTIVE
PARTICIPATION IN NATION'S AFFAIRS. ANOTHER FACTOR IS, OF
COURSE, MILITANT BUDDHIST ABILITY TO FOMENT DISORDER. WE
DOUBT THEY HAVE EITHER THE ORGANIZATION OR THE MASS SUPPORT
TO DO SO HAVING BEEN ISOLATEDAND KEPT OFF BALANCE SINCE
FAILURE OF 1966 "STRUGGLE." POSSIBILITY OF ATTEMPT TO TEST
THIR STRENGTH IN NEAR FUTURE CANNOT, HOWEVER, BE DISCOUNTED.

(C) CHARGE BY [redacted] THAT VOTING CARDS BEING WITHHELD
HAS BEEN MADE BY OTHERS INCLUDING SEVERAL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

PAGE FIVE RUMJIR 4787 C O N F I D E N T I A L
ON AUGUS 31, HOWEVER, SAIGON PREFECTURE ANNOUNCED THAT 83
PERCENT OF VOTING CARDS IN CQITAL HAD BEEN ISSUED AND ISSUANCE
WILL CONTINUE UNTIL 3 P.M. ON ELECTION DAY ITSELF.

GP-3 BUNKER

CONFIDENTIAL

CLASSIFICATION

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAIGON 04787 022102Z

PAGE FIGEHTUMJIR 4787 C O N F I D E N T CBZ L
ON AUGUST 31, HOWEVER, SAIGON PREFECTURE ANNOUNCED THAT 83
PER CENT OFUOTING CARDS IN CAPITAL HAD BEEN ISSUED AND ISSUANCE
WILLNAONTINUE UNTIL 3P.M ON ELECTION DAY ITSELF.

GP-3 BUNKER

NOTE: AS RECEIVED, CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

CONFIDENTIAL